Marina Thinks Oswald Did It

Washington

Lee Harvey Oswald's widow, insisting she has no firsthand knowledge that her husband assassinated John F. Kennedy, conceded under intense questioning yesterday that she believes he did murder the President.

"Yes, I do believe he did. I believe the man was capable of it," said Marina Oswald Porter, who has steadfastly maintained that she is not qualified to say whether Oswald killed Kennedy in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

Mrs. Porter — on her second day of testimony — told the House Assassinations Committee that if Oswald did murder Kennedy, he most likely was motivated by an obsessive and irrational bid to gain recognition.

"I'm just as anxious to find answers as everybody else is," she said.

Under persistent questioning by committee members, however, Mrs. Porter acknowledged her apparently longstanding personal opinion that Oswald shot Kennedy.

She also said that she believes her husband acted alone because his secretive nature would not have allowed him to confide in anyone about an assassination plan.

Mrs. Porter was asked whether Oswald's motives would have been political or the product of mental instability.

"I really don't know what to say about the motive," she replied, adding:

"If you want my personal opinion as to whether it's mental or political, I would have to say it's the mental state of the person. The whole matter is so irrational it's difficult for us to come up with any rational answer."

She said: "I don't think a person who kills somebody is stable, whatever the reasons are." As for Oswald's motives, she added: "I still don't think it's strictly political."

Mrs. Porter agreed that there was some merit to a contention by Representative Richardson Preyer (Dem-N.C.) that Oswald may have chosen to kill Kennedy because he thought assassinating a president would bring instant recognition.

Mrs. Porter also was quizzed vigorously yesterday on subtle differences between her current testimony and the accounts she previously gave to the Warren Commission, the FBI, the Secret Service and author Priscilla Johnson McMillan.

She had testified on Wednesday, for example, that she believed Soviet authorities had censored mail and bugged the apartment where she and Oswald lived in Minsk in the months after their marriage in April, 1961. Mrs. Porter said then that she had had no direct knowledge that they were under surveillance but assumed from gossip that the authorities would spy on any American living there.

McMillan's book about the Oswalds quotes Marina as saying that a Soviet commissar told her that the couple was under surveillance. She told the committe yesterday that the McMillan account is correct and that she had failed to recall the situation fully in her testimony Wednesday.

Mrs. Porter also testified that she and Oswald stayed in a boarding house in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, as they traveled from the Soviet Union to the United States in 1962. Representative Christopher Dodd (Dem-Conn.) noted that she has previously testified that they stayed in a private apartment there.

It was not immediately clear what the committee was trying to establish, but most of the questions on her contradictions appeared to go to the point of Oswald's possible involvement in any sort of conspiracy.

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